

THE OBSTETRICIAN, ANÆSTHETIST AND PÆDIATRICIAN IN THE MANAGEMENT OF OBSTETRIC PROBLEMS. Edited by T. Barnett and J. J. Foley. (Pp. xiii+188; illustrated. 50s.) Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1963.

THIS is the transcript of proceedings at the first Obstetric Conference held under the auspices of the South-Western Obstetrical and Gynæcological Society in Portsmouth in November, 1961. There were five sessions, devoted to the very important practical subjects of The Unstable Lie, Obstetric Anæsthesia, The Place of the General Practitioner in Obstetrics, Asphyxia, Neonatorum and Management of the Third Stage. The contributors were well chosen and were drawn from all parts of the British Isles. As the discussion at each session is also included, each subject is very adequately explored in all its aspects. Though the cost may be considered excessive for a book of this size the reviewer agrees with the editor's comment that this book "will appeal alike to general practitioners practising obstetrics, who wish to be informed of the best consultant opinion on the subjects discussed, and to specialist obstetricians who wish to understand the problems confronting the general practitioner obstetrician."

G. B. G.

ALLERGOLOGY: PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ALLERGOLOGY, NEW YORK, 1961. Edited by Ethan Allan Brown. (Pp. 455. 105s.) Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1963.

THE international conference is becoming increasingly important as a means of assembling and presenting advances in medical knowledge, and this volume can fairly be regarded as a symposium of the latest work on a fascinating subject by experts from the United States, Canada and Europe. The broadest view has been taken of allergy, consequently the forty-three papers deal with a great variety of subjects, and it is this recognition of allergy as a phenomenon with an infinite number of facets and as the main ingredient of many different clinical conditions that makes the book so valuable. The fact that auto-immune disease, hypogammaglobulinæmia and homo-graft rejection are discussed in the same section shows how far we have moved since the days when asthma, hay-fever and eczema were the only allergic disorders known to most physicians.

Many of the papers are perhaps fully comprehensible only by the biochemist. They give the latest information about the biochemistry of the antigen-antibody reaction and the identity of its mediators—an exciting chapter in an admittedly unfinished but rapidly unfolding story. But there is also much information for the clinician. In particular, there is an excellent exposition of hypersensitivity to drugs, of the management of asthma and of the use of mineral oil emulsions for desensitisation to pollen.

It is a pity that a more euphonious title could not have been found for the book but that is the only criticism which can be made of a work which is likely to remain the most authoritative in its field until the next international congress of allergology is held. E. F. J.

THE ACHILLES REFLEX TEST (A.R.T) IN THE DIAGNOSIS OF THYROID DYSFUNCTION. By Maurice Bear Gordon, M.D. (Pp. 19; figs. 17. \$1) Manhasset, New York: Ventnor Publishers and Romaine Pierson Publishers, 1962.

THIS monograph is reprinted from *Medical Times*, Vol. 90, no. 9 (1962), 913-933. It presents evidence for accepting alterations in the speed of the achilles reflex time as indicative of thyroid function, and in one hundred patients correlates the achilles reflex time with the basal metabolic rate and protein bound iodine estimations, using the kinemometer and the photomograph as specially designed apparatus to record the achilles reflex time in milliseconds.

Although for years the clinician has been aware of the sluggish ankle jerk in hypothyroid patients, this study tends to introduce a high order of accuracy in assessing the achilles reflex time.

In border-line patients the achilles reflex test would appear to be of assistance in estimating thyroid function. Details of the test are fully presented and illustrated.

M. W. J. B.